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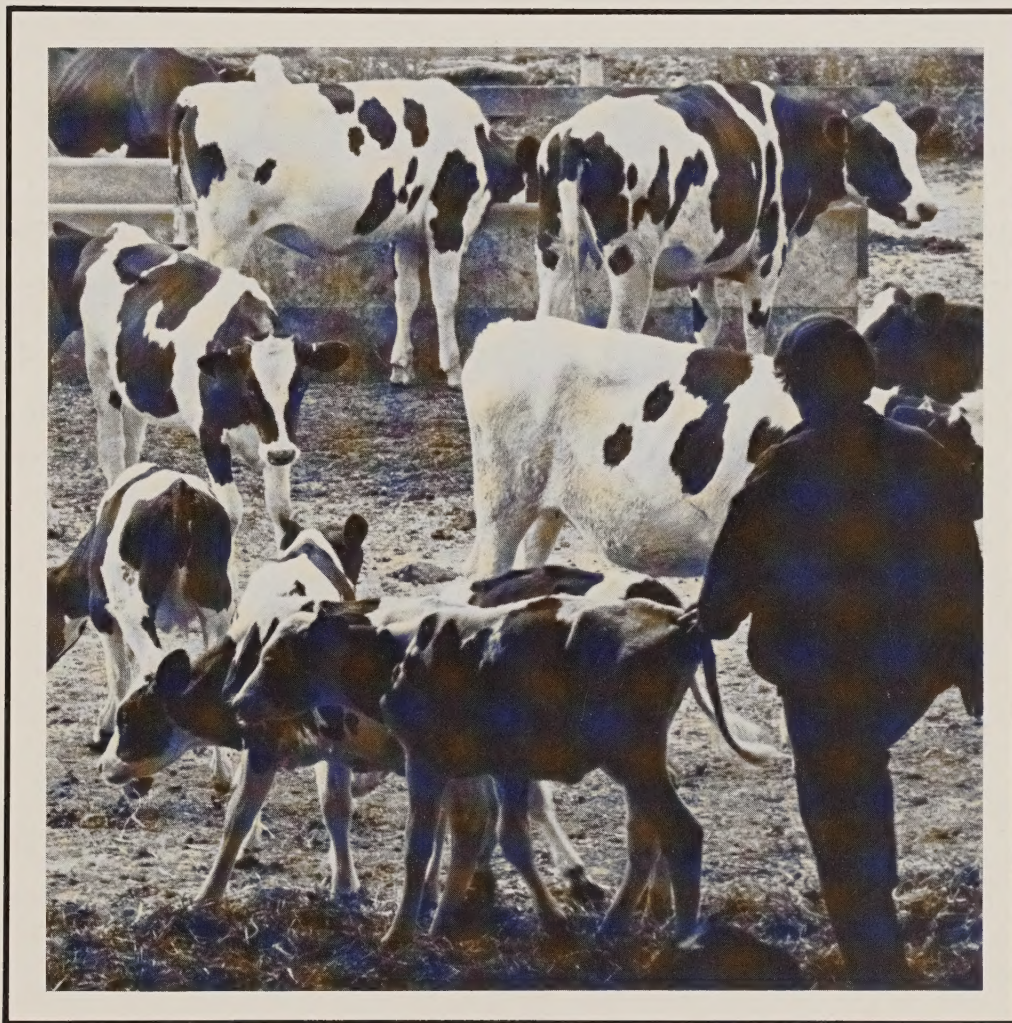
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# Visiting People on a Dairy Farm



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# Introduction



This is a story about a real family—the Schwartzbecks. They live near Baltimore, Maryland, and they own a dairy farm.

In this booklet, we will visit the Schwartzbecks. You will get to see what it is like to live on a dairy farm.

You will probably notice how life on a dairy farm is different from your life. But also, you will see how farmpeople are much like you and your friends.

This is a story about milk and about people. It tells how milk is produced. It tells how dairy farmers earn their living.

Come on. The Schwartzbecks want to meet you.



# The People



Meet Gus and Shane Schwartzbeck. Gus, in the football jersey, is 10 years old. Shane, in the overalls, is 6. The Schwartzbecks bought their farm when Gus was 2 years old. Shane has lived here all his life.

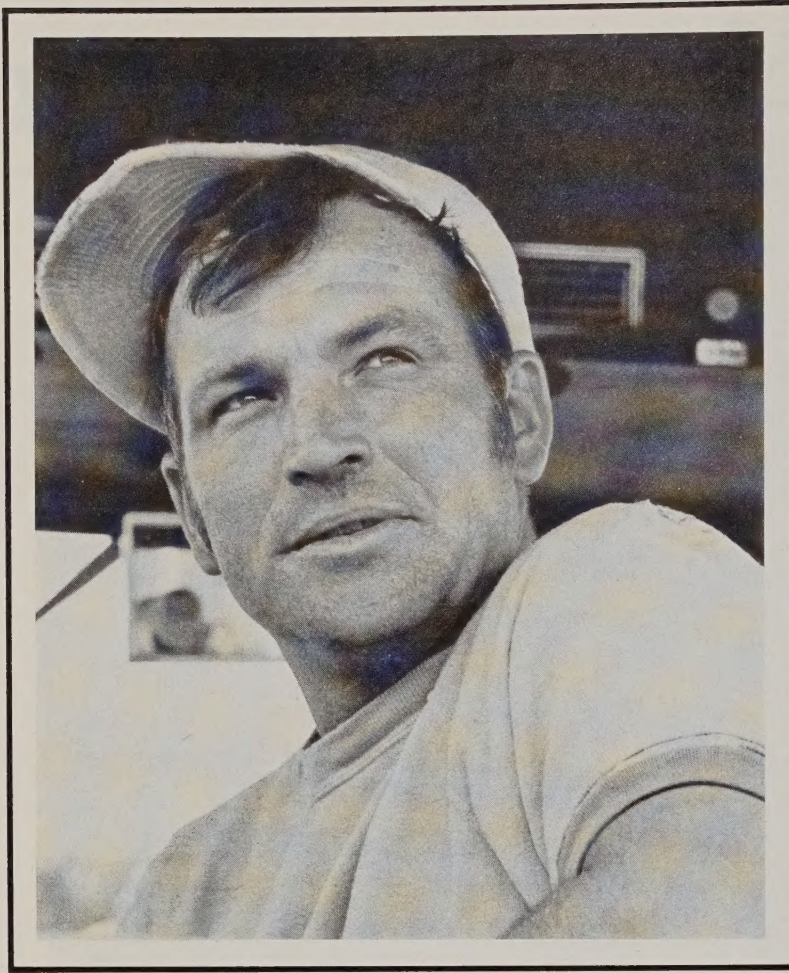
During the school year, Gus and Shane go to school. But they also work on the farm. They do chores before supper and on the weekends.

Most of the work is fun. For example, they get to feed the calves. But some of the work isn't much fun; they have to help clean out the barns. In general, Gus and Shane do whatever needs doing. They know their work is important. They know it helps keep the farm running.

During summer vacation, Gus and Shane help even more. Besides taking care of the cattle, they also help in the fields with the crops. Friends who visit often help Gus and Shane with the chores.

Gus and Shane like farm life. They try to learn what they can about the farm. After all, when they grow up, the farm will probably belong to them.





The man in the sweatshirt is Joe Schwartzbeck. He is Gus and Shane's dad. Like Shane and Gus he grew up on a dairy farm.

Joe farms because he likes to farm. He works for himself instead of for someone else. He enjoys being his own boss. Joe Schwartzbeck is proud to be a dairy farmer.

To keep the farm going, Joe has learned to be a jack-of-all-trades. He knows about medicines to keep his livestock healthy. He also understands bookkeeping and business law. He is part mechanic, part scientist, and part businessman.

Joe works every day of the year. His day starts at 4 in the morning. When he finishes, it is usually after dark.

Joe works hard. But he is still a boy at heart. He still loves to play softball. You will get to know Joe better as he shows us the farm.





The lady is Nona Schwartzbeck. She is Gus and Shane's mom.

This morning, Nona was up before 4 a.m. First, she helped Joe milk the cows. Then, while Joe finished the milking, Nona checked to make sure the calves were okay. Then she cooked a big farm breakfast of chipped beef and waffles. That was just the start of Nona's day.

Nona helps with much of the farmwork. She is in charge of the calves, for one thing. She also helps with farm organizations in the community. Yesterday, for example, she helped organize the county fair. Nona is so busy that she has office space set aside for herself.

Does Nona like such a busy life? You bet she does. Nona likes being able to plan and do so much work. She feels independent. She also likes the way farmwork keeps her family doing things together.





The fellow with the cigar is Harold Holman. His nickname is "Mr. Gus." Mr. Gus is not a Schwartzbeck, but he is so close to the family that he is like a member of the family.

Mr. Gus is the hired man. He's a good one, too. "He is one in a thousand," says Joe, "he knows how to work."

Mr. Gus seems to know how to do everything. He helps with all the farmwork. But he is especially good taking care of the cows. He treats them very gently.

Mr. Gus also helps the Schwartzbecks in special ways. Last night for example, he did the evening milking by himself. That way, Joe and Nona could go out for the evening.





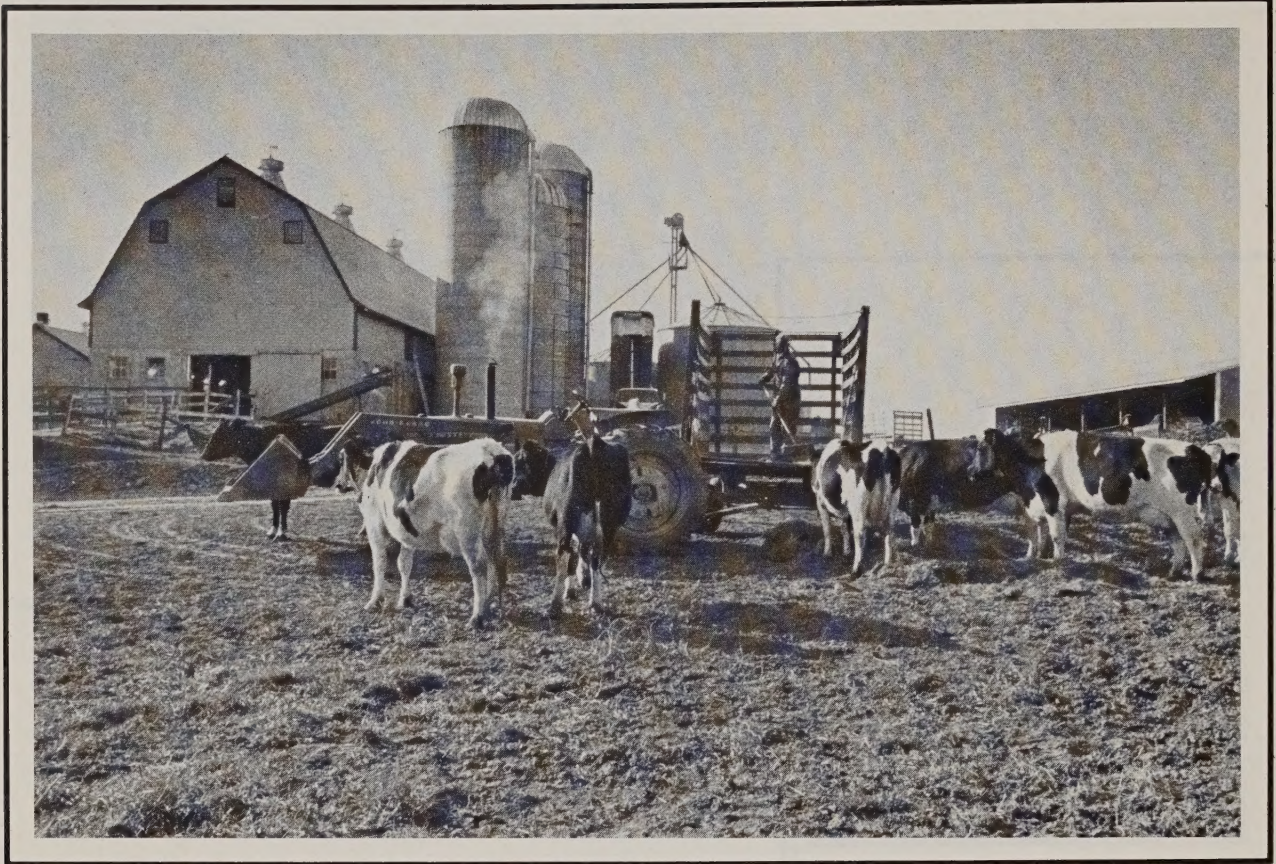
Pets are also a part of the Schwartzbeck family. Did you hear the screen door slam? That is Blackie, their cat, looking for her pan of milk.

Upon that bale of hay is Judy Booth. She is the Schwartzbecks' basset hound. She and her new puppies love to play in the barn.

Now you have met all the Schwartzbecks. They are obviously a happy, hard-working family. The Schwartzbecks would like to show us around the farm. Let's go.



# The Farm



As we walk after Joe, he talks to us. "When Nona and I got married," he says, "we decided to work at something we like. We both like animals. We like country life. We like working for ourselves. We decided that dairy farming was for us."

At first, Joe tells us, he and Nona ran the farm that Joe grew up on. That farm was then sold to a land developer. Eventually the cow pasture became houses and yards. Joe and Nona had to find another farm.

Fifty miles away, Joe and Nona found a farm for sale. It was old and rundown. It had no hot water or modern electric wiring. But it did have 290 acres of good land.

Joe and Nona decided that they could make a living on that old farm. But it cost \$125,000. Joe and Nona didn't have that much money. Was this the end?

Joe and Nona refused to give up their dream. They asked the Federal Land Bank for a loan. The Federal Land Bank is owned by farmers. It loans



money only to farmers who have a good chance of success.

Officers of the Federal Land Bank looked hard at the Schwartzbecks' loan application. They knew the Schwartzbecks already owned 60 good milk cows. They knew that Joe had grown up on a dairy farm. They knew that Joe and Nona were hard workers.

"Yes," the banker said, "we will loan you the money."

That was a happy day. Joe and Nona named their new place "Peace and Plenty Farm." Then they set to work.

That was 8 years ago. Today, Peace and Plenty Farm is a success. The property would be worth more than half a million dollars if they were to sell it. The old farmhouse is now clean and modern. The Schwartzbecks have made a home and a living for themselves.

We enter a new, well-lit building. It is so clean that it almost squeaks. "This building," Nona says proudly, "is the milking parlor."

In the old days, Nona explains, cows were milked by hand. It was slow, hard work. Nowadays, the milking parlor makes the job faster and easier. The person doing the milking doesn't have to carry milking machines to each cow standing in a row in a barn. The cows come to the milking parlor and take turns standing by the machines while they are milked. It's much easier that way.

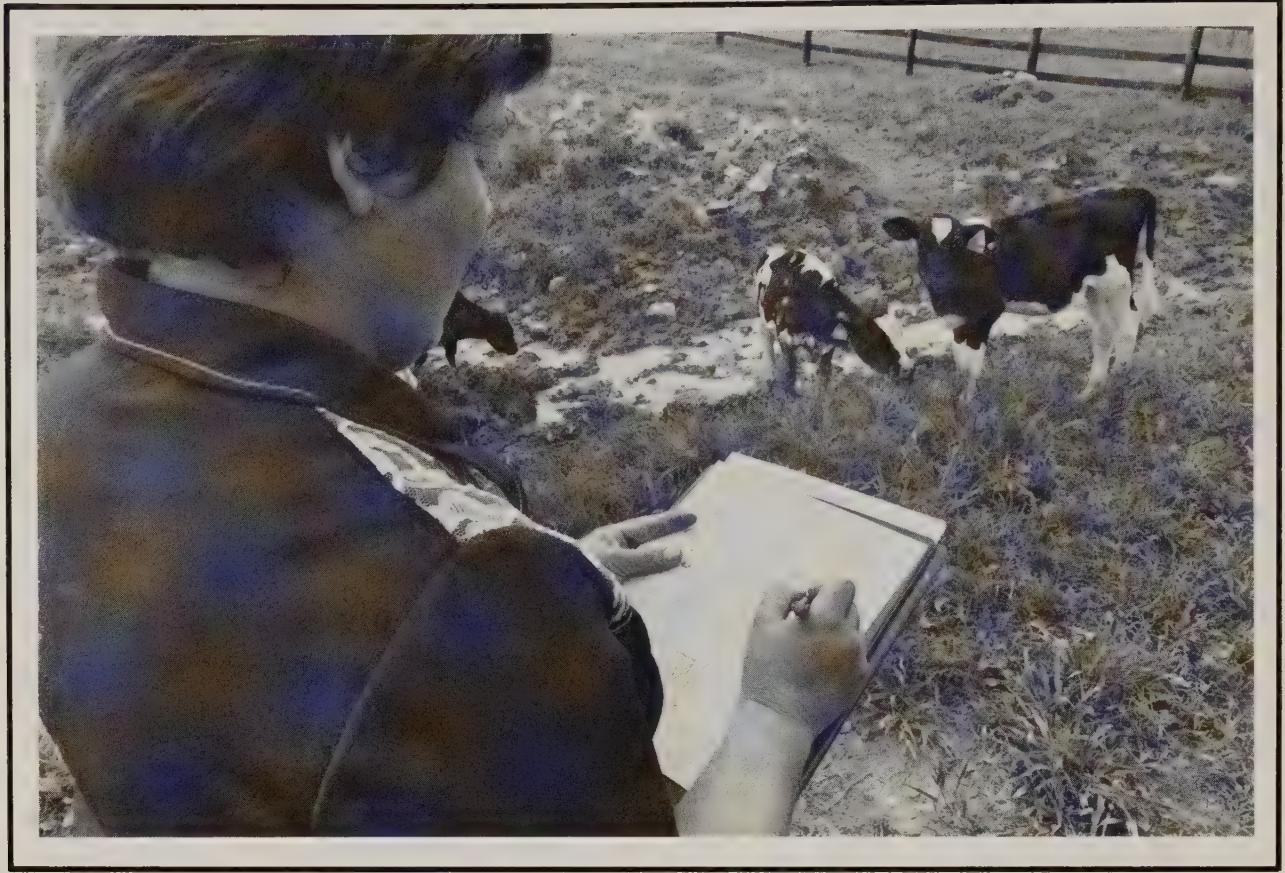
"We milk our cows twice a day," Nona says. "So, you see how important the milking parlor is to us. With these machines, one person can milk 86 cows in 2 hours."

We learn that the milking parlor was expensive. Joe built it himself, and it still cost more than \$28,000. That's as much as many houses cost at that time. The milking equipment is expensive. For example, those big glass jars that collect milk as it comes from the cow cost \$360 each. No wonder dairy farming takes a lot of money.

Joe and Nona tell us that they enjoy working in the milking parlor. Seeing all the milk as it comes from the cows shows them the results of all their hard work. An average dairy cow gives about 10,000 pounds of milk a year. But Schwartzbeck cows average almost 16,000 pounds of milk a year. What would you say? Is Peace and Plenty Farm a success?



# The Animals



A dairy farm is like a ball team. The Schwartzbecks are the managers of the Peace and Plenty "team." The cows are their star players.

Notice the cows that Joe is feeding. Every one has been carefully selected for the qualities that make a good milk cow. The Schwartzbecks raised most of them from the time they were born as small calves. Joe is as proud of those cows as a manager is of his ball players. He knows the history and background and mannerisms of each cow as well as you know your best friend.

The Schwartzbecks know that cows give more milk when they are relaxed. So they treat the cows gently. For example, when Joe walks past a cow, he sometimes speaks to her by name. A friendly pat on the back is as important to a cow as it is to us.

Nona shows us her sketchbook. In it, she has been drawing the black and white markings of that new calf.



The sketch will help Nona tell that calf from all others. It will be used also to identify the animal when it is listed—registered—with the Holstein-Friesian Association, somewhat as other purebred animals are listed with their breed's association. The sketch also is the start of a record book for that calf. In it, Nona will record who its parents were. She will keep track of its growth and health. When it grows up, Nona will keep track of how much milk it gives.

Such records are important. They tell Nona which dairy cows are the best. Those will be mated with the best possible bulls, which are offspring of the best-producing cows. The result will be even better calves.

Keeping careful records of milk production and selecting the best animals to keep in the herd have already helped the Schwartzbecks raise a national prizewinner. The Schwartzbecks sold her for \$11,000. At that time, an average dairy cow sold for \$500. So you see why keeping records is so important to Nona.

Joe points out the 86 cows that make up the Schwartzbeck "first team." Because the cows have each given birth to calves, they now give milk daily for several months after the calf is born. They have proven themselves.

Joe then shows us 40 more cows. These are the second team. Joe calls them "heifers." He explains that they are like teenage cows. They have not given birth. So they do not give milk yet. The heifers are the rookies on the Schwartzbeck farm. They have potential. But they have to earn their place on the first team.



# The Crops



Joe has just finished feeding the cows. Feeding is such a big job that it requires a tractor. Joe parks it next to the barn and climbs down to join us.

Good dairy cows need good feed. So the Schwartzbecks raise the best possible feed. Joe points out a field of corn that he is growing for feed. The corn sways in the wind. “Beautiful, isn’t it?” Joe asks.

Most of the Schwartzbeck farm is planted to corn. In fact, the farm looks like an ocean of corn. Way in the distance, we see Mr. Gus driving a tractor. The corn is so tall it almost hides him.

Joe tells us that Mr. Gus is cutting “silage.” He cuts the green corn somewhat like we would mow grass. But instead of using a lawnmower, Mr. Gus pulls a corn-chopper behind his tractor.

“The whole corn plant gets chopped up,” Joe says. “Leaves, stalks, and immature ears of corn all become silage. Our cows eat silage year around. It is their main food.”



We watch the silage spray into the air, then settle into the wagon behind Mr. Gus's corn-chopper.

"We cut half the corn crop for green silage," Joe says. "We let the other half mature. Then we harvest the grain from it. The cows will get most of that grain, too."

If it is a good year, Joe will harvest more corn than his cows need. He will sell the extra corn to other farmers. This income, along with what he gets from selling milk, will pay his farm bills. Corn seed and fertilizer alone cost Joe \$26,000 a year. A successful farmer is, after all, a good businessman.

"Then again, it might not be a good year," Joe says. "Frost might freeze the corn. Fungus might get it. Drought might stunt it. Insects might destroy it right in the field." Joe smiles. "But we will do our best," he says.

"Do you smell that?" Joe asks. We all take a deep breath. The air smells sweet. "That's fresh-cut hay," Joe says.

"Yesterday was perfect for haying," he says. "It was warm and sunny, not a cloud in the sky. That makes hay dry quickly."

Joe explains that hay is important to cows because it provides protein. Besides the fiber in hay helps keep the cow's digestive system healthy. "Our hay is a combination of clover, timothy grass, and alfalfa," he says.

"Is hay the same as straw?" somebody asks.

"No," Joe answers. "Hay is mostly leaves and green stems. Straw is mostly stems and isn't very nutritious. It is older—more mature—and has few leaves.

"Mr. Gus and I will work until after midnight getting hay into the barn," Joe says. "Otherwise it might get rained on. That would wash out more than half the nutrients and the hay might spoil."

Also many leaves would fall off and be left on the ground when the hay is picked up.

We are beginning to realize that growing crops for the cows takes a lot of time. It's a sunup-to-sundown job, at least. But Joe seems to enjoy it.

"You know," he says, "I like looking at a field of corn. Then, when I'm harvesting, I like looking back and seeing the wagon fill up with grain."



# Machines and Buildings



Can you image how many machines are needed on a dairy farm? Just look around Peace and Plenty Farm. You can see five tractors and many other machines.

"Sometimes every tractor is going at the same time," Joe says. "Three will be helping chop silage. Those two with scoops on the front will be cleaning manure from the barns. At times like that, I hire part-time workers to give us a hand."

"You have already seen the corn-chopper, hay baler, and wagon," Joe says. "We also have a corn planter, a plow, two trucks, and nine more wagons, and we use them all."

"Even then, we don't own all the machines we need," Joe says. "We trade machines with our neighbors. Sharing saves us all money."

Joe keeps his machines in tiptop shape. When they break down, he tries to fix them himself. But not even Joe manages to fix them all. Last year, he



hired mechanics for \$6,000 worth of work.

Peace and Plenty Farm reminds us of a small town. There are buildings everywhere and each has a purpose.

Take barns, for example. This barn holds 50 dairy cows. That one can hold 80 cows and has a special place where calves are born. Heifers share a barn with older calves, and the bulls have one to themselves.

Then there are more buildings. The tall, round ones are silos. The short ones are grain bins. Remember the grain that Joe grows? He stores it in the bins to protect it from weather, insects, and other pests.

Most of the silage is stored in that long, low, three-sided building without a roof. It's called a bunker and it holds 1,200 tons of silage. That's enough to feed all the Schwartzbeck cows for a full year.

On Peace and Plenty Farm, even the machines have their own buildings. The buildings protect the machines from rust and dirt. Joe invites us to look at the machine shop with him.

In a few minutes, blinding light from Joe's arc-welder fills the shop. Joe is using an arc welder to apply a hard substance to the edge of his plow. Soon, he turns off the arc-welder and lifts the mask that protected his eyes.

"Most of my work in the machine shop is to prevent breakdowns," Joe says. "This arc-welding is an example. It keeps the plow's edge hard."

Then Joe turns to the corn planter. "Here's another example," he says. "See this little spring? It costs only a few bucks. But I check it regularly, because if the spring breaks, the whole machine stops. That could mean getting the corn planted late. It could mean the difference between a good year and a bad year. That's why I try to prevent problems before they start. That's why the machine shop is so important to the farm."



# A Visit to the Kitchen



We walk out of the shop and into bright daylight. We have seen most of Peace and Plenty Farm, but our tour isn't quite over. "Come on into the kitchen," Gus calls.

As we enter the kitchen, we are greeted by a great smell. Nona has baked a cake for us! There's cake and milk for everybody.

The cake is as good as it smells. As we eat, we have a chance to ask the Schwartzbecks some more questions.

"Are there many dairy farms in the United States?" somebody asks.

"There are about 300,000 of them," Joe says. "But every day we lose some. When I was a kid in 1950, more than 3½ million farms had milk cows. Now there are fewer than half a million."

"Does that mean there is less milk being produced than in the old days?" someone asks.



"It seems like it should," Joe answers. "But we are getting as much milk now as we did then."

"How can that be?" someone asks.

"Because each cow produces more milk for one thing," Joe says. "In 1950, the average cow produced about 5,000 pounds of milk a year. Today, she produces more than double that. You can see that we get the same amount of milk with half as many cows."

"Is this a big dairy farm?" somebody asks.

"No," Joe says. "By today's standards, Peace and Plenty is a small farm. There are fewer and fewer dairy farms, but they are getting bigger and bigger. Why, down in Florida, there is a farm with more than 7,000 cows."

Our questions stop for a minute as Nona offers more milk. Most of us ask for seconds.

"Where does all your milk go?" somebody asks. "Do people drink it all?"

"People drink a lot of it," Nona says. "The milk used for drinking is called Class I Milk. But farmers produce more milk than people can drink. The extra milk can be Class II or Class III."

"What happens to Class II and Class III Milk?" someone asks.

"Class II Milk is made into ice cream, yogurt, cottage cheese, and other soft dairy products," Nona answers. "Class III is used in powdered milk, hard cheeses, and butter. Class III Milk also ends up in many kinds of packaged food. You should look for it in the list of ingredients. It may be hard to believe, but, statistically speaking, every one of us uses about 500 pounds of milk a year."

Someone notices that it is time to head home. It has been a great visit. We thank the Schwartzbecks for sharing their day with us. We thank Nona for the cake and milk. Then we say "farewell" to Peace and Plenty Farm. We hope that the farm will continue to prosper.

Today we have seen what life is like on a dairy farm. Next time we pass one, we will know what goes on there. We will remember about cows, heifers, bulls, and calves. We will know more about the crops we see



growing. We will better understand how the machines and buildings are used.

But most of all, we will appreciate the family that lives on the farm. We will know how hard they work to produce milk for all of us. And we will know that they love their work. We will remember our visit with the Schwartzbecks.

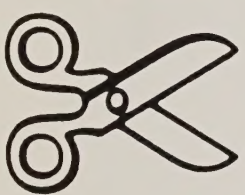
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# Cut Out Your Own Cow

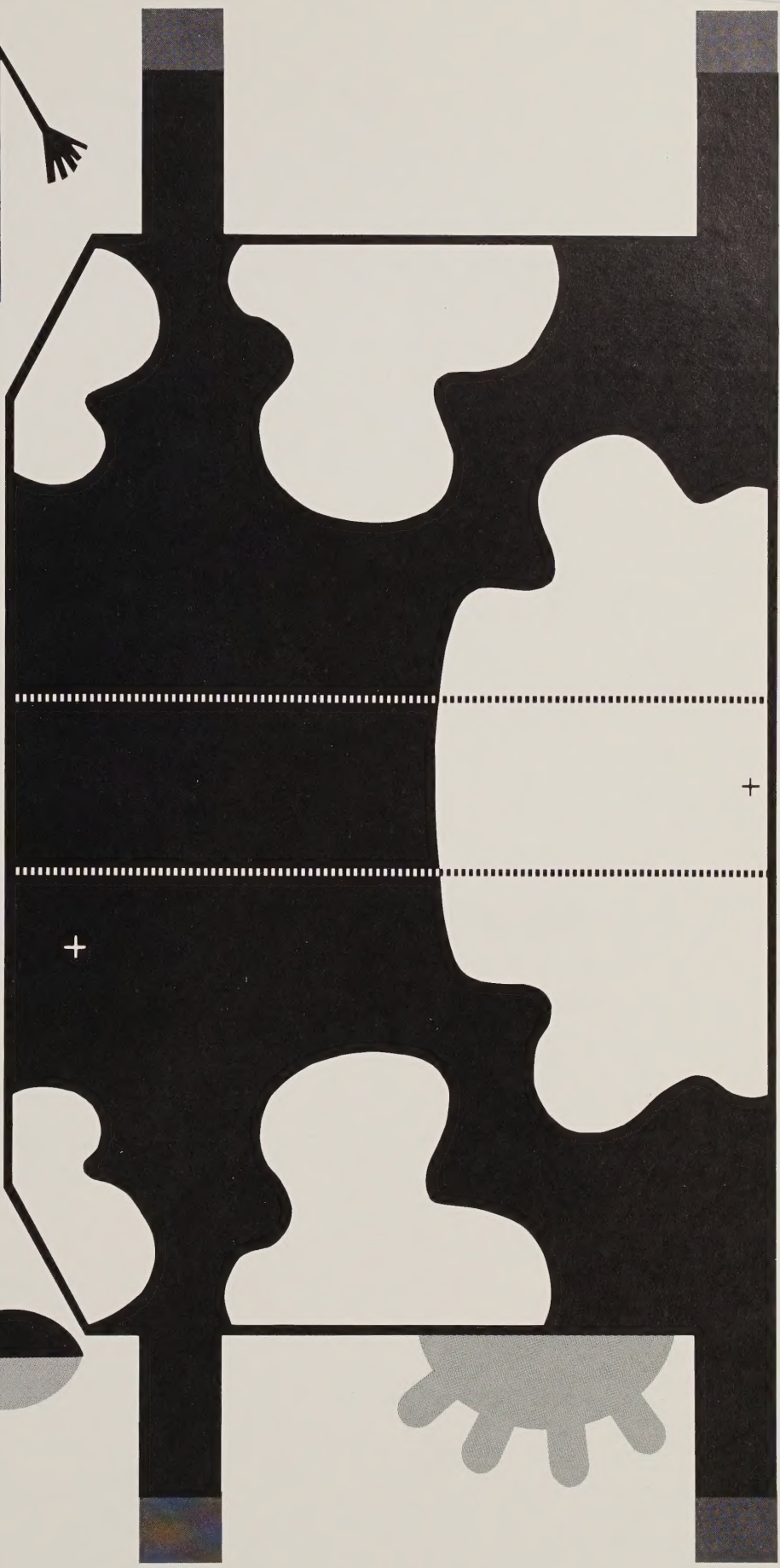


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